

ARCTIC SEARCHING EXPEDITION.

CHAPTER I.

Route assigned to the Expedition under Command of Sir John Franklin.—Names of the Officers.—Erebus and Terror.—Date of its Sailing.—Last Letters.—Sir John Franklin's Last Official Letter.—Last Sight of the Expedition.—Sir John Ross proposes a Search.—Discussion of various Opinions offered respecting the Fate of the Expedition.—Plans of Search adopted.—Main Objects of the Overland Searching Expedition.—Instructions from the Admiralty.

HER MAJESTY'S government having deemed it expedient that a further attempt should be made for the accomplishment of a northwest passage by sea from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the "Erebus" and "Terror" were fitted out for that service, and placed under the command of Captain Sir John Franklin, K.C.H. He was directed by the Admiralty instructions, dated on the 5th of May, 1845, to proceed with all dispatch to Lancaster Sound, and, passing through it, to push on to the westward, in the latitude of $74\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, without loss of time or *stopping to examine any openings to the northward*, until he reached the longitude of Cape Walker, which is situated in about 98° west. He was to use every effort to penetrate to the *southward* and *westward* of that point, and to pursue as direct a course for Beering's Straits as circumstances might permit. He was cautioned not to attempt to pass by the western extremity of Melville Island, until he had ascertained that a permanent barrier of ice or other obstacle closed the prescribed route. In the event of not being able to penetrate to the westward, he was to enter Wellington Sound in his second summer.

He was further directed to transmit accounts of his proceedings to the Admiralty, by means of the natives and the Hudson's Bay Company, should opportunities offer; and also, after passing the 65th meridian, to throw overboard daily a copper cylinder, containing a paper stating the ship's position. It was also understood

that he would cause piles of stones or signal-posts to be erected on conspicuous headlands at convenient times, though the instructions do not contain a clause to that effect.*

The following officers joined the expedition :

EREBUS.

Captain, Sir John Franklin, Kt.
K.C.H.
Commander, James Fitzjames.
Lieutenant, Graham Gore.
Lieut., H. P. D. Le Vesconte.
Lieut., James W. Fairholme.
Ice-Master, James Read.
Surgeon, Stephen S. Stanley.
Paymaster, C. H. Osmer.
Assist.-Surge., H. D. S. Goodsir.
Sec. Master, Henry F. Collins.

TERROR.

Captain, Francis R. M. Crozier.
Lieutenant, Edward Little.
Lieutenant, George H. Hodgson.
Lieutenant, John Irving.
Ice-Master, Thomas Blanky.
Surgeon, John S. Peddie.
Assist.-Surgeon, A. M'Donald.
Sec. Master, Gillies A. Maclean.
Clerk-in-Charge, Edward J. H. Helpman.

And the conjoined crews of the two ships amounted to 130 souls.

The "Erebus," originally built for a bomb-vessel, and therefore strongly framed, was of 370 tons measurement, and had been fortified, in 1839, after the most approved plan, by an extra or double exterior planking and diagonal bracing within, for Sir James C. Ross's Antarctic voyage; from which she returned in 1843. Having been carefully examined and refitted for Sir John Franklin, she was considered to be as strongly prepared to resist the pressure of the ice as the resources of science, and the utmost care of Mr. Rice, the skillful master-shipwright who superintended the preparations, could insure. The "Terror," of 340 tons, was also constructed for a bomb-vessel, and had the bluff form, capacious hold, and strong framework of that class of war vessels. When commanded by Captain Sir George Back, on his voyage to Repulse Bay in 1836-7, she had been beset for more than eleven months in drifting floes of ice, and exposed to every variety of assault and pressure to which a vessel was liable in such a dangerous position. In this severe and lengthened trial, the "Terror" had been often pressed more or less out of the water, or thrown over on one side, and had, in consequence thereof, sustained some

* The instructions are published at length in a parliamentary Blue Book, and all known particulars respecting the expedition have been communicated from time to time to the public by the same channel. The above abstract mentions the leading points which would direct the course of the expedition.

damage, particularly in the stern post. All defects, however, were made good in 1839, when she sailed for the Antarctic Seas, under the command of Captain Crozier, the second officer of Sir James C. Ross's expedition. She was again examined, and made as strong as ever, before Captain Crozier took the command of her a second time in 1845.

The best plans that former experience could suggest for ventilating and warming the ships in the winter were adopted, and full supplies of every requisite for Arctic navigation were provided, including an ample stock of warm bedding, clothing, and provisions, with a proportion of preserved meats and pemican.

The expedition sailed from England on the 19th of May, 1845, and, early in July, had reached Whalefish Islands, near Disco, on the Greenland coast of Davis's Straits, where, having found a convenient port, the transport which accompanied it was cleared and sent home to England, bringing the last letters that have been received from the officers or crew. The following extract of a letter, from Lieutenant Fairhelme, of the "Erebus," will serve to show the cheerful anticipation of success which prevailed throughout the party, and the happy terms on which they were with each other :

"We have anchored in a narrow channel between two of the islands, protected on all sides by land, and in as convenient a place for our purpose as could possibly be found. Here we are with the transport lashed alongside, transferring most actively all her stores to the two ships. I hope that this operation will be completed by to-morrow night, in which case Wednesday will be devoted to swinging the ships for local attraction, and I suppose Thursday will see us under way with our heads to the northward. We have had the observatory up here, on a small rock on which Parry formerly observed, and have got a very satisfactory set of magnetic and other observations. Of our prospects we know little more than when we left England, but look forward with anxiety to our reaching 72°, where it seems we are likely to meet the first obstruction, if any exists. On board we are as comfortable as it is possible to be. I need hardly tell you how much we are all delighted with our captain. He has, I am sure, won not only the respect but the love of every person on board by his amiable manner and kindness to all; and his influence is always employed for some good purpose both among the

officers and men. He has been most successful in his selection of officers, and a more agreeable set could hardly be found. Sir John is in much better health than when we left England, and really looks ten years younger. He takes an active part in every thing that goes on, and his long experience in such services as this makes him a most valuable adviser. *July 10th.*—The transport is just reported clear, so I hope that we may be able to swing the ships to-morrow and get away on Saturday. We are very much crowded; in fact, not an inch of stowage has been lost, and the decks are still covered with casks, &c. Our supply of coals has encroached seriously on the ship's stowage; but as we consume both this and provisions as we go, the evil will be continually lessening."

Letters from most of the other officers, written in a similarly buoyant and hopeful spirit, were received in England at the same time with the above. An extract of a letter from Sir John Franklin himself to Lieutenant Colonel Sabine deserves to be quoted, as expressing his own opinion of his resources, and also his intention of remaining out should he fail after a second winter in finding an outlet to the southwestward from Barrow's Strait. The letter is dated from Whalefish Islands, on the 9th of July, 1845, and, after noticing that the "Erebus" and "Terror" had on board provisions, fuel, clothing, and stores for three years complete, from that date, adds, "I hope my dear wife and daughter will not be over-anxious if we should not return by the time they have fixed upon; and I must beg of you to give them the benefit of your advice and experience when that time arrives, for you know well that, without success in our object, even after the *second winter*, we should wish to try some other channel if the state of our provisions and the health of the crews justify it."

The following is the last official letter written by Sir John Franklin to the Admiralty.

"Her Majesty's Ship 'Erebus,'
Whalefish Islands, July 12, 1845

"SIR—I have the honor to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that Her Majesty's ships 'Erebus' and 'Terror,' with the transport, arrived at this anchorage on the 4th instant, having had a passage of one month from Stromness. The transport was immediately taken alongside this ship, that she might be more readily cleared; and we have been constantly employed at that operation till last evening, the delay having been caused not so much in getting the stores transferred to either of the ships, as in making the best stowage of

them below, as well as on the upper deck. The ships are now complete with supplies of every kind for three years: they are, therefore, very deep; but happily we have no reason to expect much sea as we proceed further.

"The magnetic instruments were landed the same morning; so also were the other instruments requisite for ascertaining the position of the observatory; and it is satisfactory to find that the results of the observations for latitude and longitude accord very nearly with those assigned to the same place by Sir Edward Parry. Those for dip and variation are equally satisfactory, which were made by Captain Crozier with the instruments belonging to the 'Terror,' and by Commander James with those of the 'Erebus.'

"The ships are now being swung, for the purpose of ascertaining the dip and deviation of the needle on board, as was done at Greenhithe; which I trust will be completed this afternoon, and I hope to be able to sail in the night.

"The governor and principal persons are at this time absent from Disco; so that I have not been able to receive any communication from head quarters as to the state of the ice to the north. I have, however, learned from a Danish carpenter in charge of the Esquimaux at these islands, that, though the winter was severe, the spring was not later than usual, nor was the ice later in breaking away hereabout. He supposes, also, that it is now loose as far as 74° , and as far as Lancaster Sound, without much obstruction.

"The transport will sail for England this day. I shall instruct the agent, Lieutenant Griffiths, to proceed to Deptford, and report his arrival to the Secretary of the Admiralty. I have much satisfaction in bearing my testimony to the careful and zealous manner in which Lieutenant Griffiths has performed the service intrusted to him, and would beg to recommend him as an officer who appears to have seen much service, to the favorable consideration of their Lordships.

"It is unnecessary to assure their Lordships of the energy and zeal of Captain Crozier, Commander Fitzjames, and of the officers and men with whom I have the happiness of being employed on this service.

"I have, &c.,

"JOHN FRANKLIN,

"Captain.

"The Right Hon. H. L. Cary, M.P.

"&c. &c. &c."

The two ships were seen on the 26th of the same month (July) in latitude, $74^{\circ} 48' N.$, longitude $66^{\circ} 13' W.$, moored to an iceberg, waiting for a favorable opportunity of entering or rounding the "middle ice" and crossing to Lancaster Sound, distant in a direct westerly line from their position about 220 geographical miles. On that day a boat from the discovery ships, manned by seven officers, one of whom was Commander Fitzjames, boarded the "Prince of Wales," whaler, Captain Dannett. They were all in high spirits and invited Captain Dannett to dine with Sir

John Franklin on the following day, which had he done, he would doubtless have been the bearer of letters for England, but a favorable breeze springing up he separated from them. The ice was then heavy but loose, and the officers expressed good hopes of soon accomplishing the enterprise. Captain Dannett was favored with very fine weather during the three following weeks, and thought that the expedition must have made good progress. This was the last sight that was obtained of Franklin's ships.

In January, 1847, a year and a half after the above date, Captain Sir John Ross addressed a letter to the Admiralty, wherein he stated his conviction that the discovery ships were frozen up at the *western end of Melville Island*, from whence their return would be forever prevented by the accumulation of ice behind them, and volunteered his services to carry relief to the crews. Sir John also laid statements of his apprehensions before the Royal and Geographical Societies, and, the public attention being thereby roused, several writers in the newspapers and other periodicals published their sentiments on the subject, a variety of plans of relief were suggested, and many volunteers came forward to execute them.

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, though judging that the second winter was too early a period of Sir John Franklin's absence to give rise to well founded apprehensions for his safety, lost no time in calling for the opinions of several naval officers who were well acquainted with Arctic navigation, and in concerting plans of relief, to be carried out when the proper time should arrive.

A brief review of the replies most worthy of notice may help the reader to form a judgment of the plans that were eventually adopted by the Admiralty for the discovery and relief of the absent voyagers. It is convenient to consider first the notions of those who believe that Sir John Franklin never entered Lancaster Sound, either because the ships met with some fatal disaster in Baffin's Bay, and went down with the entire loss of both crews, or that Sir John endeavored to fulfill the purposes of the expedition by taking some other route than the one exclusively marked out for him by his instructions. That the ships were not suddenly wrecked by a storm, or overwhelmed by the pressure of the

ice, may be concluded from facts gathered from the records of the Davis's Straits whale-fishery, by which we learn that of the many vessels which have been crushed in the ice, in the course of several centuries, the whole or greater part of the crews have almost always escaped with their boats. It is, therefore, scarcely possible to believe that two vessels so strongly fortified as the "Erebus" and "Terror," and found by previous trials to be capable of sustaining so enormous a pressure, should both of them have been so suddenly crushed as to allow no time for active officers and men, disciplined and prepared for emergencies of the kind, to get out their boats. And having done so they would have had little difficulty in reaching one of the many whalers, that were occupied in the pursuit of fish in those seas for six weeks after the discovery ships were last seen. Moreover, had the ships been wrecked, some fragments of their spars or hulls would have been found floating by the whalers, or being cast on the eastern or western shores of the bay, would have been reported by the Greenlanders or Eskimos. Neither are any severe storms recorded as having occurred then or there, nor did any unusual calamity befall the fishing vessels that year.

With respect to Sir John Franklin having chosen to enter Jones's or Smith's Sounds in preference to Lancaster Sound, his known habit of strict adherence to his instructions is a sufficient answer, and the extract quoted above from his letter to Lieutenant Colonel Sabine, which gives his latest thoughts on the subject, plainly says that such a course would not be pursued until a *second winter* had proved the impracticability of the route laid down for him. This point is mooted, because Mr. Hamilton, surgeon in Orkney, states that Sir John, when dining with him on the last day that he passed in Great Britain, mentioned his determination of trying Jones's Sound. But Sir John's communication to Colonel Sabine shows that this could be meant to refer only to the contingency of a full trial by Lancaster Sound proving fruitless. Supposing that, contrary to all former experience, he had found the mouth of Lancaster Sound so barred by ice as to preclude his entrance, then, after waiting till he had become convinced that it would remain closed for the season, he might have tried to find a way, by Jones's Sound, into Wellington Sound; but in such a case, we may hold it as certain that he would have erected conspicuous cairns, and deposited memo-

randa of his past proceedings and future intentions, at the entrance of Lancaster Sound.

Taking it, then, for granted that the expedition entered Lancaster Sound, the most probable conjecture respecting the direction in which it advanced is that Sir John, literally following his instructions, did not stop to examine any openings either to the northward or southward of Barrow's Strait, but continued to push on to the westward until he reached Cape Walker, in longitude 98° , when he inclined to the southwest, and steered as directly as he could for Beering's Straits. But even supposing that the state of the ice permitted him to take the desired route, and to turn to the southwestward by the first opening beyond the 98th meridian, we are ignorant of the exact position of that opening, the tract between Cape Walker and Banks's Land being totally unknown. That a passage to the southward does exist in that space, and terminates between Victoria and Wollaston Lands in Coronation Gulf, is inferred from the observed setting of the flood tide. There is, it is true, an uncertainty in our endeavors to determine the directions of the tides in these narrow seas, where the currents are influenced by prevailing winds; but Mr. Thomas Simpson, who was an acute observer, remarked that the flood tide brought much ice into Coronation Gulf round the west end of Victoria Land, and facts collected on three visits which I have made to that gulf lead me to concur with him. Entirely in accordance with this opinion is the fact noted by Sir Edward Parry, that the flood tide came from the north between Cornwallis and the neighboring islands, and that the ice was continually setting round the west end of Melville Island and passing onward to the southeast.

These observations, while they point to an opening to the eastward of Banks's Land, may be adduced as an argument against the existence of a passage directly to the westward between it and Melville Island; and, though they are not conclusive, they are supported by another remark of Sir Edward Parry's that he thought there was some peculiar obstruction immediately to the west of that island, which produced a permanent barrier of ice.

But wherever the opening which we presume to exist may be situated, the channels among the islands are probably not direct, and may be intricate. Vessels, therefore, having pushed into one

of them, would be exposed to the ice closing in behind and barring all regress. Sir John Ross, whose opinions are first recorded in the parliamentary Blue Book, believes that "Sir John Franklin put his ships into the drift ice at the western end of Melville Island," and that, "if not totally lost, they must have been carried by the ice, which is known to drift to the southward, on land (Banks's Land) seen at a great distance in that direction, and from which the accumulation of ice behind them will," says he, "as in my own case, forever prevent the return of the ships."

Sir W. Edward Parry is of opinion that Sir John Franklin would endeavor "to get to the southward and westward before he approached the southwestern extremity of Melville Island, that is, between the 100th and 110th degree of longitude:" "how far they may have penetrated to the southward between those meridians, must be a matter of speculation, depending on the state of the ice and the existence of land in a space hitherto blank in our maps." "Be this as it may, I (Sir W. E. Parry) consider it not improbable, as suggested by Dr. King, that an attempt will be made by them to fall back on the western coast of North Somerset, wherever that may be found, as being the nearest point affording a hope of communication, either with whalers or with ships sent expressly in search of the expedition."

Sir James C. Ross says: "It is far more probable, however, that Sir John Franklin, in obedience to his instructions, would endeavor to push the ships to the south and west as soon as they passed Cape Walker; and the consequence of such a measure, owing to the known prevalence of westerly winds, and the drift of the main body of the ice, would be their inevitable embarrassment; and if he persevered in that direction, which he probably would do, I have no hesitation in stating my conviction, that he would never be able to extricate his ships, and would ultimately be obliged to abandon them. It is, therefore, in latitude 73° N. and longitude 135° W. that we may expect to find them involved in the ice, or shut up in some harbor."

The opinions here quoted are contingent on the supposition, that Sir John Franklin found the state of the ice to be such that he could take the routes in question; but the several officers quoted admit that, in the event of no opening through the ice in a westerly or southwesterly direction being found, Sir John would attempt Wellington Sound, or any other northern opening that was

accessible. Commander Fitzjames, in a letter dated January, 1845, says: "The northwest passage is certainly to be gone through by Barrow's Straits, but whether south or north of Parry's Group remains to be proved. I am for going far north, edging northwest till in longitude 140° W., if possible." Mr. John Barrow, to whom this letter was addressed, appends to it the following memorandum: "Captain Fitzjames was much inclined to try the passage to the northward of Parry's Islands, and he would, no doubt, endeavor to persuade Sir John Franklin to pursue that course, if they failed to get to the southward."

My own opinion, submitted to the Admiralty in compliance with their commands, was substantially the same with that of Sir James Clark Ross, though formed independently; and I further suggested that, in the event of accident to the ships, or their abandonment in the ice, the members of the expedition would make either for Lancaster Sound to meet the whalers, or Mackenzie River, to seek relief at the Hudson's Bay posts, as they judged either of these places most easy of attainment.*

After deliberately weighing these and other suggestions, and fully considering the numerous plans submitted to them, the Admiralty determined that, if no intelligence of the missing ships arrived by the close of autumn, 1847, they would send out three several searching expeditions—one to Lancaster Sound, another down the Mackenzie River, and the third to Beering's Straits.

The object of the first, and the most important of the three, was to follow up the route supposed to have been pursued by Sir John Franklin; and, by searching diligently for any signal-posts he might have erected, to trace him out, and carry the required relief to his exhausted crews. Sir James Clark Ross was appointed to the command of this expedition, consisting of the "Enterprise" and "Investigator;" and, as his plan of proceeding bears upon my own instructions, I give it at length:

"As vessels destined to follow the track of the expedition must, necessarily, encounter the same difficulties, and be liable to the same severe

[* Since the publication of the English edition of this work, the return of the American Arctic Expedition (Oct., 1851), has brought intelligence proving that Sir John Franklin's expedition was at Beechy Cape, at the Entrance of Wellington Sound, from January 1, to April 3, 1846, at least. The graves of three members of his party, bearing these dates, were discovered at that spot.—AM. PUS.]

pressure from the great body of the ice they must pass through in their way to Lancaster Sound, it is desirable that two ships, of not less than 500 tons, be purchased for this service, and fortified and equipped, in every respect as were the 'Erebus' and 'Terror,' for the Antarctic Seas.

"Each ship should, in addition, be supplied with a small vessel or launch of about 20 tons, which she could hoist in, to be fitted with a steam-engine and boiler of ten-horse power, for a purpose to be hereafter noticed.

"The ships should sail at the end of April next, and proceed to Lancaster Sound, with as little delay as possible, carefully searching both shores of that extensive inlet, and of Barrow's Strait, and then progress to the westward.

"Should the period at which they arrive in Barrow's Strait admit of it, Wellington Channel should next be examined, and the coast between Cape Clarence and Cape Walker explored, either in the ships or by boats, as may at the time appear most advisable. As this coast has been generally found encumbered with ice, it is not desirable that both ships should proceed so far along it as to hazard their getting beset there and shut up for the winter; but in the event of finding a convenient harbor near Garnier Bay or Cape Rennell, it would be a good position in which to secure one of the ships for the winter.

"From this position the coast line might be explored, as far as it extends to the westward, by detached parties early in the spring, as well as the western coast of Boothia, a considerable distance to the southward, and at a more advanced period of the season the whole distance to Cape Nicolai might be completed.

"A second party might be sent to the southwest as far as practicable, and a third to the northwest, or in any other direction deemed advisable at the time.

"As soon as the formation of water along the coast, between the land and main body of the ice admitted, the small steam-launch should be dispatched into Lancaster Sound, to communicate with the whale-ships at the usual time of their arrival in those regions, by which means information of the safety or return of Sir John Franklin might be conveyed to the ships before their liberation from their winter quarters, as well as any further instructions the Lords Commissioners might be pleased to send for their future guidance.

"The easternmost vessel having been safely secured in winter quarters, the other ship should proceed alone to the westward, and endeavor to reach Winter Harbor in Melville Island, or some convenient port in Banks's Land, in which to pass the winter.

"From this point, also, parties should be dispatched early in spring, before the breaking up of the ice. The first should trace the western coast of Banks's Land, and proceeding to Cape Bathurst, or some other conspicuous point of the continent, previously agreed on with Sir John Richardson, reach the Hudson's Bay Company's settlement of Fort Good Hope on the Mackenzie, whence they may travel southward by the usual route of the traders to York Factory, and thence to England.

"The second party should explore the eastern shore of Banks's Land, and, making for Cape Krusenstern, communicate with Sir John Richardson's party on its descending the Coppermine River, and either assist him

in completing the examination of Wollaston and Victoria Land, or return to England by any route he should direct.

"These two parties would pass over that space in which most probably the ships have become involved (if at all), and would, therefore, have the best chance of communicating to Sir John Franklin information of the measures that have been adopted for his relief, and of directing him to the best point to proceed, if he should consider it necessary to abandon his ships.

"Other parties may be dispatched, as might appear desirable to the commander of the expedition, according to circumstances; but the steam-launches should certainly be employed to keep up the communication between the ships, to transmit such information for the guidance of each other as might be necessary for the safety and success of the undertaking.

(Signed)

"JAMES C. ROSS,

"Captain, R.N."

"Athenæum, 2 December, 1847."

By a subsequent arrangement between Sir James Ross and myself, under the sanction of the Admiralty, I undertook to deposit pemican at Fort Good Hope and Point Separation on the Mackenzie, and Capes Bathurst, Parry, Krusenstern, and Hearne, on the sea-coast, for the use of Sir James Ross's detached parties.

The Beering's Straits expedition was composed of the "Herald," Captain Kellet, then employed in surveying the Pacific coasts of America, and the "Plover," Commander Moore. The vessels were expected to arrive in Beering's Straits about the 1st of July, 1848, and were directed to "proceed along the American coast as far as possible, consistent with the certainty of preventing the ships being beset by the ice." A harbor was to be sought for the "Plover" within the Straits, to which that vessel was to be conducted; and two whale-boats were to go on to the eastward in search of the missing voyagers, and to communicate, if possible, with the Mackenzie River party. The "Plover" was fitted out in the Thames in December, 1847; but having been found to leak when she went to sea, was compelled to put into Plymouth for repair, and did not finally leave England until February, 1848. This tardy departure, conjoined with her dull sailing, prevented her from passing Beering's Straits at all in 1848; but she wintered near Cape Tschukotskoi, on the Asiatic coast, just outside of the Straits.

The "Herald" visited Kotzebue Sound, repassed the Straits before the arrival of the "Plover," and returned to winter in South America, with the intention of going northward again next season.

The main object of the searching party intrusted to my charge, was to trace the coast between the Mackenzie and Coppermine Rivers, and the shores of Victoria and Wollaston Lands lying opposite to Cape Krusenstern. In a preceding page I have adduced reasons for believing that there is a passage to the northward between these lands; and if so, its position makes it the most direct route from the continent to the unknown tract interposed between Cape Walker and Banks's Land, into which Sir John Franklin was expressly ordered to carry his ships. Should he have done so, and his egress by the way he entered be barred by the ice closing in behind him as already suggested, there remained a probability that the annual progression of the ice southward would eventually carry the ships into Coronation Gulf, or, if abandoned before that event, their crews were to be sought for on their way to the continent.

At the time when Sir John Franklin left England, two other openings from the north into the sea washing the continental shores were supposed to exist. The most westerly of these is between Boothia and Victoria Land, and it was part of Sir James Ross's plan to examine the whole western side of Boothia and North Somerset by one of his steam-barges.

The other supposed entrance was by Regent's Inlet. Dease and Simpson had left only a small space unsurveyed between that inlet and the sea, which was known to afford in good seasons a passage all the way to Beering's Straits; and this might have recommended the route by Regent's Inlet for trial. But, exclusive of its being absolutely prohibited by Sir John Franklin's instructions, Sir Edward Parry and Sir James Ross, on whose opinions Sir John placed deservedly the greatest reliance, were decidedly averse to his attempting a passage in that direction; and it was known that Sir John Franklin had resolved on trying all the other openings before he entered Regent's Inlet, which was to be his last resource. It fortunately happened before any of the searching expeditions were finally organized, that the non-existence of a passage through that inlet was fully ascertained.

Mr. John Rae, a Chief Trader in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, left Fort Churchill in the beginning of the summer of 1846, with two boats, for the express purpose of completing the survey of Regent's Inlet. He arrived in Repulse Bay in the month of August of that year, and immediately crossed an

isthmus, forty-three miles wide, to the inlet, taking one boat with him. Finding that the season was too far advanced for him to complete the survey that year, he determined, with a boldness and confidence in his own resources that has never been surpassed, to winter in Repulse Bay, and to finish his survey of Regent's Inlet on the ice next spring; so that he might be able to return to Churchill and York Factory by open water in the summer of 1847. He therefore recrossed the isthmus again with his boat, and set about collecting provisions and fuel for a ten months' winter. To one less experienced and hardy, the desolate shores of Repulse Bay would have forbidden such an attempt. They yielded neither drift-wood nor shrubby plants of any kind; but Mr. Rae employed part of his men to gather the withered stems of the *Andromeda tetragona*, a small herbaceous plant which grew in abundance on the rocks, and to pile it in cocks like hay: others he set to build a house of stone and earth, large enough to shelter his party, amounting in all to sixteen; while he himself and his Eskimo interpreter were occupied in killing deer for winter consumption. He succeeded in laying up a sufficient stock of venison, and kept his people in health and strength for next year's operations, though not in comfort, for the chimney was so badly constructed for ventilation, that when the fire was lighted it was necessary to open the door, and thus to reduce the temperature of the apartment, nearly to that of the external air. The fire was, therefore, used as seldom as possible, and only for cooking or melting snow to drink. In the spring he completed the survey of Prince Regent's Inlet on foot, thereby proving that no passage existed through it, and confirming the Eskimo report, first made to Sir Edward Parry, and afterward to Sir John Ross. A party of Eskimo, who resided near Mr. Rae in the winter, informed him, through his interpreter, that they had not seen Franklin's ships, thereby excluding the Gulf of Boothia from the list of places to be searched.

Having thus mentioned the opinions most worthy of note, respecting the quarters in which search was to be made, the plans of search adopted by the Admiralty after duly weighing a great variety of suggestions, and the extent of coast and parts of the Arctic Sea embraced in the three expeditions of the summer of 1848, I subjoin the instructions I received from the Admiralty:

Instructions to Sir John Richardson, M.D., 16th March, 1848. By the Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral, &c.

"Whereas, we think fit that you should be employed on an overland expedition in search of Her Majesty's ships 'Erebus' and 'Terror,' under the command of Captain Sir John Franklin, which ships are engaged in a voyage of discovery in the Arctic Seas, you are hereby required and directed to take under your orders Mr. Rae, who has been selected to accompany you, and to leave England on the 25th instant, by the mail steamer for Halifax in Nova Scotia, and New York; and on your arrival at the latter place, you are to proceed immediately to Montreal, for the purpose of conferring with Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's Settlements, and making arrangements with him for your future supplies and communications.

"You should next travel to Penetanguishene, on Lake Huron, and from thence, by a steamer, which sails on the 1st and 15th of every month of open water, to Saut Ste. Marie, at the foot of Lake Superior, and there embark in a canoe, which, with its crew, will have been provided for you, by that time, by Sir George Simpson.

"Following the usual canoe route by Fort William, Rainy Lake, the Lake of the Woods, Lake Winnipeg, and the Saskatchewan River, it is hoped that you will overtake the boats now under charge of Mr. Bell, in July, 1848, somewhere near Isle à la Crosse, or perhaps the Methy Portage.

"You will then send the canoe with its crew back to Canada, and having stowed the four boats for their sea voyage, you will go on as rapidly as you can to the mouth of the Mackenzie; leaving Mr. Bell to follow with the heavier laden barge, to turn off at Great Bear Lake, and erect your winter residence at Fort Confidence, establish fisheries, and send out hunters.

"Making a moderate allowance for unavoidable detention by ice, thick fogs, and storms, the examination of the coast between the Mackenzie and the Coppermine Rivers will probably occupy 30 days; but you can not calculate to be able to keep the sea later than the 15th of September, for, from the beginning of that month, the young ice covers the sea almost every night, and very greatly impedes the boats, until the day is well advanced.

"If you reach the sea in the first week of August, it is hoped you will be able to make the complete voyage to the Coppermine River, and also to coast a considerable part of the western and southern shores of Wollaston Land, and to ascend the Coppermine to some convenient point, where the boats can be left with the provisions ready for the next year's voyage; and you will instruct Mr. Bell to send two hunters to the banks of the river to provide food for the party on the route to Fort Confidence, and thus spare you any further consumption of the pemican reserved for the following summer.

"As it may happen, however, from your late arrival on the coast, or subsequent unexpected detentions, that you can not with safety attempt to reach the Coppermine, you have our full permission in such a case to return to Fort Good Hope, on the Mackenzie, there to deposit two of the boats, with all the sea stores, and to proceed with the other two boats, and the whole of the crews, to winter quarters on Great Bear Lake.

"And you have also our permission to deviate from the line of route along the coast, should you receive accounts from the Eskimos, which may appear credible, of the crews of the 'Erebus' and 'Terror,' or some part of them, being in some other direction.

"For the purpose of more widely extending your search, you are at liberty to leave Mr. Rae and a party of volunteers to winter on the coast, if, by the establishment of a sufficient fishery, or by killing a number of deer or musk oxen, you may be able to lay up provisions enough for them until you can rejoin them next summer.

"As you have been informed by Captain Sir James Ross, of Her Majesty's ship 'Enterprise,' who is about to be employed on a similar search in another direction, of the probable directions in which the parties he will send out toward the continent will travel, you are to leave a deposit of pemican for their use at the following points—namely, Point Separation, Cape Bathurst, Cape Parry, and Cape Krusenstern; and as Sir James Ross is desirous that some pemican should be stored at Fort Good Hope, for the use of a party which he purposes sending thither in the spring of 1849, you are to make the necessary arrangements with Sir George Simpson for that purpose, as his directions to that effect must be sent early enough to meet the Company's brigade of Mackenzie River boats at Methy Portage, in July, 1848.

"Should it appear necessary to continue the search a second summer (1849), and should the boats have been housed on the Coppermine, you are to descend that river, on the breaking up of the ice in June, 1849, and to examine the passages between Wollaston and Banks's and Victoria Lands, so as to cross the routes of some of Sir James C. Ross's detached parties, and to return to Great Bear Lake in September, 1849, and withdraw the whole party from thence to winter on Great Slave Lake, which would be as far south as you will have a prospect of traveling before the close of the river navigation.

"Should you have found it necessary to return to the Mackenzie (September, 1848), instead of pushing on to the Coppermine, the search in the summer of 1849 would, of course, have to be commenced from the former river again; but should circumstances render it practicable and desirable to send some of the party down the Coppermine with one or two boats, you are at liberty to do so.

"A passage for yourself and Mr. Rae will be provided in the 'America,' British and North American mail-steamer, which sails from Liverpool on the 25th of March, and you will receive a letter of credit on Her Majesty's Consul at New York for the amount of the expense of your journey from New York to Saut Ste. Marie, and the carriage of the instruments, &c.

"And in the event of intelligence of the 'Erebus' and 'Terror' reaching England after your departure, a communication will be made to the Hudson's Bay Company to ascertain the most expeditious route to forward your recall.

"We consider it scarcely necessary to furnish you with any instructions contingent on a successful search after the above-mentioned expedition, or any parties belonging to it. The circumstances of the case, and your own local knowledge and experience, will best point out the means to be adopted for the speedy transmission to this country of intelligence to the above

effect, as well as of aiding and directing in the return of any such parties to England.

"We are only anxious that the search so laudably undertaken by you and your colleagues should not be unnecessarily or hazardously prolonged; and while we are confident that no pains or labor will be spared in the execution of this service, we fear lest the zeal and anxiety of the party so employed may carry them further than would be otherwise prudent.

"It is on this account you are to understand that your search is not to be prolonged after the winter of 1849, and which will be passed on the Great Slave Lake; but that, at the earliest practical moment after the breaking up of the weather in the spring of 1850, you will take such steps for the return of the party under your orders to England as circumstances may render expedient.

"It must be supposed that the instructions now afforded you can scarcely meet every contingency that may arise out of a service of the above description; but reposing, as we do, the utmost confidence in your discretion and judgment, you are not only at liberty to deviate from any point of them that may seem at variance with the objects of the expedition, but you are further empowered to take such other steps as shall be desirable at the time, and which are not provided for in these orders.

"Given under our hands, 16th March, 1848.

(Signed)

"AUCKLAND.

"J. W. D. DUNDAS.

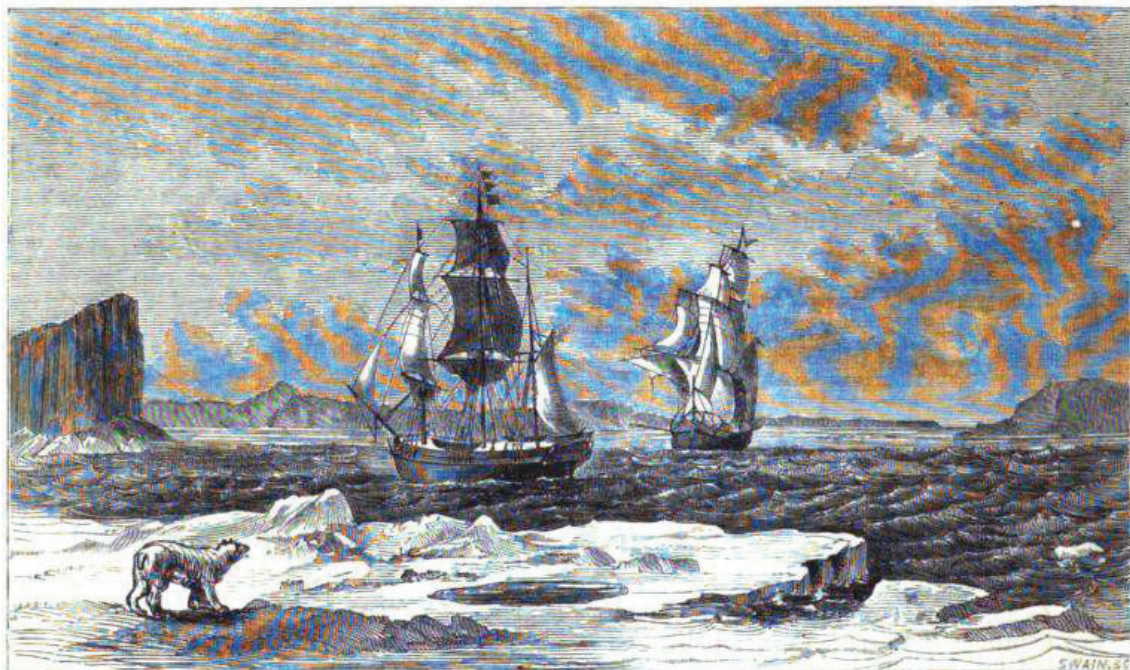
"To Sir John Richardson, M.D., &c.

"By command, &c.

(Signed) "W. A. B. Hamilton."

THE LAST VOYAGE OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

BY CAPTAIN SHERARD OSBORN, R.N.



Stopped by the Ice. (See page 341.)

"THERE is yet one thing left undone, whereby a great mind may become notable," wrote worthy Master Purchas—that one deed was the discovery of a north-west passage to the Indies. Many long years afterwards, the words of the good Dean of St. Paul's sounded like a trumpet-call to his countrymen, and many an aspiring spirit essayed to do that deed whereby bright honour and immortality were to be won. The veil which hid from human ken the mysteries of the Arctic zone was not to be rent by one bold stroke; it was to be the test of British perseverance, patience, and hardihood. The frozen north would only reveal its wonders slowly and unwillingly to the brave men who devoted themselves to the task.

The dread realms of frost and silence were only to be penetrated by the labours of two generations of seamen and travellers. The consummation of the discovery of the north-west passage was to be obtained but by the self-sacrifice of a hundred heroes.

From 1815 to 1833 England sent forth her sons to the north in repeated expeditions by sea and

land. The earnestness of many eminent public men, members of the Royal Society—such as Sir John Barrow and Sir Francis Beaufort—kept general interest directed to those regions, in which Frobisher, Baffin, Davis, and Fox had so nobly ventured. There were no falterers; every call for volunteers was nobly responded to by officers of the Royal Navy; and John Franklin,

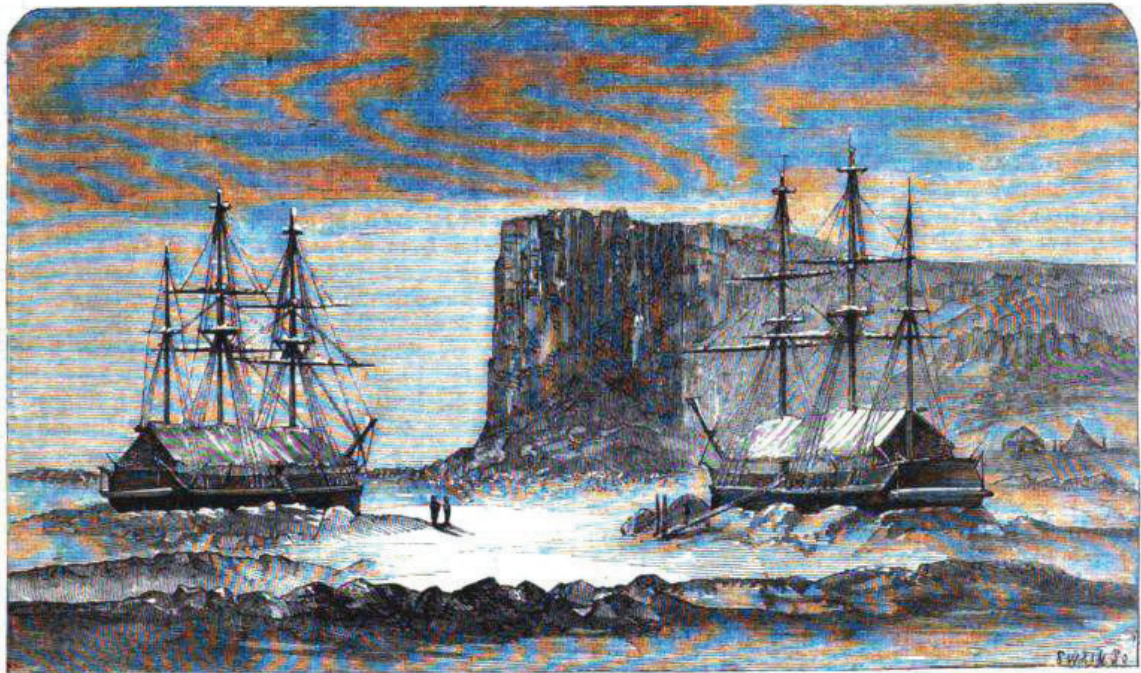
Richardson, John and James Ross, Parry, Back, and King, with much devotion, toil, and suffering, forced open the portals beyond which the Elizabethan school of discoverers had not been able to penetrate, and added much to our knowledge of the geography and physical condition of the Arctic zone between Greenland and



Behring's Straits. Fifteen years of labour had failed, however, to solve the question as to the actual existence of a water communication between the Pacific and Atlantic. Repeated disappointment had damped public zeal. Just at this juncture, between 1838 and 1843, the success of Captain Sir James Ross in an expedition to the Antarctic Pole with H.M.S. Erebus and Terror, as well

as the completion of the northern coast-line of America by the Hudson Bay Company's servants, Dease and Simpson, caused the attention of the nation to again revert to its old channel—the

North-west Passage. Anno Domini 1844 found England with a surplus revenue, a vast body of naval officers begging for employment, and eager for any opportunity of winning honours and distinction;



Franklin's first Winter Quarters, Beechey Island. (See page 342.)

and the Erebus and Terror, safe and sound from the perils of Antarctic seas, riding at anchor off Woolwich. All was most propitious for carrying out the darling object of the then venerable Secretary of the Admiralty. A mind like that of Sir John Barrow's, richly stored with the records of his country's glories in the exploration of every quarter of the globe, was keenly alive to the importance of keeping her still in the vanguard of geographical discovery; and it must be remembered that he had lived in a century when men, in spite of a long and terrible war, were almost yearly excited by the world-wide fame of the discoveries of Anson, Cooke, Flinders, and Mungo Park. Was it not natural, therefore, that he, and such as he, should desire to add to those triumphs the achievement of the greatest problem man ever undertook to solve.

The chart of the Arctic regions was in the unsatisfactory condition shown in the chart on the opposite page.

How simple an undertaking it appeared to connect the water in which Parry had sailed to Melville Island, in 1819, with Dease and Simpson's easternmost position off the coast of America in 1838.

The summer of 1844 saw many an eager face poring over that Arctic chart. Whisperings were heard that Sir John Barrow, Beaufort, Parry, Sabine, Ross, and Franklin himself, had expressed strong opinions in favour of another effort. The Royal Society, through its president, the Marquis of Northampton, was known to have urged the resumption of Arctic exploration upon the Government and Admiralty. Many an enthusiastic officer strove hard by zeal and interest

to insure being one of those selected for the glorious work. Then it was that Fitzjames, and such men as Graham Gore, Fairholme, Hodgson, and Des Vœux, succeeded in enrolling themselves on the list of the chosen few who were next year to sail for the far north-west. We see them now, as they told us so, and with glistening eye prophesied their own success. Gallant hearts! they now sleep amidst the scenes of their sore trial, but triumphant discovery.

It was at one time intended that Fitzjames (whose genius and energy marked him as no ordinary officer) should command the expedition; but just at this time Sir John Franklin was heard to say that he considered the post to be his birth-right as the senior Arctic explorer in England. He had recently returned from his post as Governor of Van Diemen's Land: his sensitive and generous spirit chafed under the unmerited treatment he had experienced from the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, and sick of civil employment, he naturally turned again to his profession, as a better field for the ability and devotion he had wasted on a thankless office. Sanguine of success, forgetful of past suffering, he claimed his right to command the latest, as he had led the earliest, of modern Arctic expeditions.

Directly it was known that he would go if asked, the Admiralty were of course only too glad to avail themselves of the experience of Franklin; but Lord Haddington, then First Lord, with that kindness which ever distinguished him, suggested that Franklin might well rest at home on his laurels. "I might find a good excuse for not letting you go, Sir John," said the peer, "in the

tell-tale record which informs me that you are sixty years of age." "No, no, my lord," was Franklin's rejoinder, "I am only *fifty-nine*!" Before such earnestness all scruples yielded—the offer was officially made and accepted—to Sir John Franklin was confided the Arctic Expedition, consisting of H.M.S. *Erebus*, in which he hoisted his pendant, and H.M.S. *Terror*, commanded by Captain Crozier, who had recently accompanied Sir James Ross in his wonderful voyage to the Antarctic seas.

The 18th of May, 1845, found the *Erebus* and *Terror* at Greenhithe in the Thames. On board of each ship there were sixty-nine officers and men, every possible corner was carefully filled with stores and provisions—enough, they said, for three years; and, for the first time in Arctic annals, these discovery vessels had auxiliary screws and engines of twenty-horse power each. Hope rode high in every breast, and the cry of Hurrah! for Behring's Straits! succeeded their last hearty cheer as the gallant ships weighed on the morrow for Baffin's Bay.

A month they sailed across the Atlantic before they reached their first halting-place, Disco, or the Whale Fish Islands, on the west coast of Greenland, in latitude 69° north. Thither a store-ship had accompanied them from England, in order that the expedition might be completed with every necessary up to the latest moment before entering the polar ice. That voyage of thirty days had served to make the officers and men thoroughly acquainted with their chief, and with each other. Of him the warm-hearted Fitzjames writes: "That Sir John was delightful; that all had become very fond of him, and that he appeared remarkable for energetic decision in an emergency. The officers were remarkable for good feeling, good humour, and great talents; whilst the men were fine hearty sailors, mostly from the northern sea-ports." Love already it is apparent, as much as duty, bound together the gallant souls on board the *Erebus* and *Terror*.

Away from Disco they sped with all haste; the Bay of Baffin is fairly entered, and their long and arduous labours commence with an Arctic tempest so severe that their brother seamen of the store-ship, hastening homeward, think with anxiety of the deep-laden *Erebus* and *Terror*. He who is strong to save guides the gallant barks, however, past the dangers of an iron-bound coast, and amongst the huge, ghost-like ice-bergs which glimmer through the storm. We see them, in better weather, urging under all sail their strong but clumsy ships, before a favourable gale, along that coast of Greenland, every headland of which has its record of human trial and noble endurance. There the lofty headland of Sanderson-his-Hope (of a North-west Passage) rears its crest of black granite, rich with crimson lichen, and crowned with snow. Norseman and Dane and Englishman have alike sailed under its stupendous cliffs, or sought shelter in quaint Uppernavik which nestles at its feet. The *Erebus* and *Terror* may not delay. Greenland has no charms for men whose leader already talks sanguinely of the yet far distant Mackenzie and Copper-mine rivers.

The flocs and broad masses of the Middle-ice

now rise upon their sight; the northern horizon gleams with reflected light from the frozen surface of the sea; the south wind fails; the ships sail from the black mists and fog-laden atmosphere common to open water in the Arctic regions, into the bright skies, smooth lanes, and mirror-like pools generally found amongst the pack during the summer season. The ice is streaming southward; the eager novices in either ship look forward with delight to the first onset with the foe they have come to do battle with. Wiser heads know that mother-wit will do more than dashing gallantry in the conflict with packed ice; the sails are taken in so as to reduce the speed, and the experienced ice-master from the crow's nest at the masthead selects the weakest looking point through which to force the ships into a lane of water, that winds snake-like along the landward edge of the pack.

"So-ho! steady—steer her with a small helm, my lad!" bawls out, in strong North-country dialect, the honest old ice-pilot, who has grown grey killing whales in Greenland. "Stand by to brail up the after-sails, if you please, sir; and to pack all the canvass upon her directly we break through the pack-edge," he urges to the officer of the watch. The churning and growling of the ice now strikes upon the ear, and at the same moment the *Erebus* and *Terror* take it manfully. There is a shock: for a second the pieces of ice hold their ground, but they yield to the weight of the ships: one mass tilts up, and slips over another, another sinks under the bows, and is heard scraping along the bottom of the ship: the road is opening. "Hard up with the helm," shouts the ice-master, and at the same time the sail is set forward to urge the ship faster through the pack; the speed accelerates, and in a few minutes they are fairly in the ice. We need not follow them in their daily labour. Ice is now on every hand: open water scarce. The crews often drag the ships for hours with ropes along the edge of the land floe that is still fast to the face of the glacier which curves round Melville Bay. Now we see them perfectly beset, the vessels secured to the lowest icebergs that can be found: they studiously avoid those lofty masses which, with spires, and domes, and steeples, resemble huge cathedrals of crystal,—for they know that such icebergs are prone to turn over, or break up suddenly, and would infallibly crush any ship that might be near them.

For a while the discovery ships meet the whaling-vessels of Aberdeen and Hull, striving, like themselves, to get through the loose ice into the waters of Pond's Bay. On July 26th they part company from the last of them, and pursue their solitary course alone. Again they pass from the northern edge of the pack into open water,—if such may be called an open sea, where icebergs are strewn plentifully. The course is now shaped for Lancaster Sound. August has set in; the sun, which has hitherto wheeled round the heavens without setting, again commences to dip below the horizon; its absence and already declining power is marked by the nightly formation of thin, glass-like ice, known as bay-ice. The south wind freshens; the *Erebus* and *Terror* press on, staggering in a heavy sea, all the more

remarkable that a hundred miles of ice have just been passed through behind them. The great entrance of Lancaster his Sound breaks out of the clouds to the westward. Capes Warrender and Hay frown grimly over the angry sea, backed by lofty mountain ranges, whose dark precipices, streaked with snow, look as if they were formed of steel and inlaid with silver.

"On, on! to the westward!" is the cry. Why need to stop and erect cairns, and deposit records of their progress. Do they not intend to pass into the Pacific next year? Have not they ordered their letters to be directed to Petropaulskoi and the Sandwich Isles? Why lose one precious hour at the threshold of their labour?

The ice is again seen: it extends along the southern side of Barrow's Straits, and is streaming out into Baffin's Bay; the ships haul in for the coast of North Devon. The scene changes considerably from what our explorers have seen in Greenland. No glaciers stretch from the interior, and launch their long, projecting tongues into the sea: no icy cliffs reflect there the colours of the emerald and turquoise: Arctic vegetation, wretched as it is, does not gladden the eyesight in even the most favoured spots. They have passed from a region of primary rock into one of magnesian limestone. Greenland is paradise, in an Arctic point of view, to the land they have now reached: it is desolation's abiding place; yet not deficient in the picturesque. The tall and escarped cliffs are cut by action of frost and thaws into buttresses and abutments, which, combined with broken castellated summits, give a Gothic-like aspect to the shores of North Devon. Valleys and plains are passed, all of one uniform dull colour; they consist simply of barren limestone. The barrenness of the land is, however, somewhat compensated for by the plentiful abundance of animal life upon the water. The seal, the whale, and the walrus abound; whilst wild fowl in large flocks feed in the calm spots under beetling cliffs or in shallow lakes, which can be looked down upon from the mast-head.

It is not far to the entrance of Wellington Channel: they reach Beechey Island, and mark the value of the bay within it as a wintering-place, and its central position with respect to the channels leading towards Cape Walker, Melville Island or Regent's Inlet. Ice again impedes their progress. Their first instructions from the Admiralty were to try to the south-west from Cape Walker. They cannot now advance in that direction, for it is a hopeless block of heavy flocs; but Wellington Channel is open, and smiles and sparkles in blue and sunlit waves, as if luring them to the north-west. Why not try a north-about passage round the Parry Islands? urges Fitzjames. Franklin agrees with him that anything is better than delay, and at any rate they determine to explore it, and ascertain whither it led. Away they press northward, until what we know as Grinnel Land rises a-head, and they have to turn more to the west. From Wellington Channel they pass between Baillie Hamilton Island and the striking cliffs of Cape Majendie.

Eager eyes are straining from the mast-head; is it a mere bay, or is it a strait they are sailing

through? "Water, water!—large water!" replies the ice-master from his eyry to the anxious queries of the veteran leader. Away, away they press—every studding sail aloft and aloft—the old ships never went so fast before—no, not on that great day in their history when they were the first to sail along the Victoria continent of the Southern Pole. From $74\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ to 77° north latitude they pushed up this noble strait, but not, as they hoped, to reach an open or navigable sea, but to find as we found in 1852—a wide expanse of water perfectly choked up with ice, extending from the head of Wellington Channel far to the westward for hundreds of miles. Baffled but not beaten, the prows of the stout ships are again turned southward, and aided by a greater share of success than has fallen to the lot of those who have come after Sir John Franklin in those same quarters, the gallant *Erebus* and *Terror* sailed down a channel which is thus proved to exist between Cornwallis and Bathurst Islands and entered Barrow's Straits at a point nearly due north of Cape Walker, in which direction Franklin was now constrained to alone look for a route whereby to reach the sea off the coast of North America.

It was well known that this southern course was that of his predilection; founded on his judgment and experience. There are many in England who can recollect him pointing on his chart to the western entrance of Simpson's Strait and the adjoining coast of North America, and saying:—"If I can but get down there my work is done; thence it's all plain sailing to the westward."

Franklin might well say this, since he and Richardson had explored nearly all that coast of Arctic America towards Behring's Straits.

The fortnight, however, which had been spent in Wellington Channel, was the short period of navigation common to the ice-choked seas within Lancaster Sound. September and an Arctic autumn broke upon them. Who that has ever navigated those seas can ever forget the excitement and danger of the autumn struggle with ice, snow-storm, and lee-shores. We see those lonely barks in the heart of a region which appears only to have been intended to test man's hardihood, and to show him that, after all, he is but a poor weak creature. Channels surround them in all directions, down and up which, let the wind blow from any quarter, an avalanche of broken flocs and ugly packed ice rolls down, and threatens to engulf all that impedes its way, checked alone by the isles which strew Barrow's Straits and serve, like the teeth of a harrow, to rip up and destroy the vast flocs which are launched against them. Around each island, as well as along the adjacent coasts, and especially at projecting capes and headlands, mountains of floc-pieces are piled mass on top of mass, as if the frozen sea would invade the frozen land. The *Erebus* and *Terror*, under the skilful hands of their noble ships' companies, flit to and fro; seek shelter first under one point, and then another. Franklin, Fitzjames, and Crozier, are battling to get into Peel Channel, between Capes Walker and Bunny. The nights are getting rapidly longer, the temperature often falls fifteen degrees below freezing point, the

pools of water on the great ice-fields as well as on the land are again firmly frozen over. The wild fowl and their offspring are seen hastening south; the plumage of the ptarmigan and willow grouse are already plentifully sprinkled with white; the mountain-tops and ravines are already loaded with snow, which will not melt away for twelve long months. Enough has been done to satisfy the leaders that a further advance this season will be impossible. Winter quarters

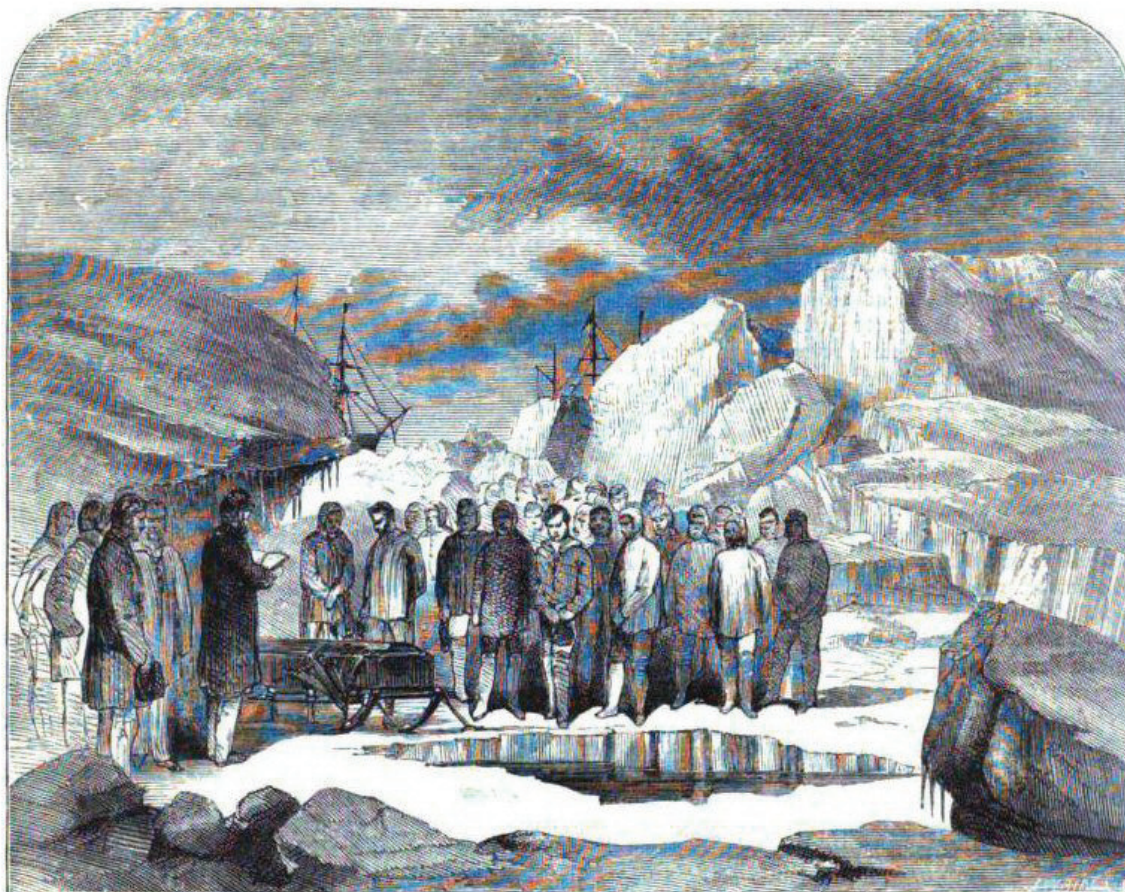
must be sought; there is none nearer that they know of than Beechey Island; the "Erebus" and "Terror" bear away for it. Fortune favours them, they are not caught in the fatal grip of the winter-pack, and drifted out into the Atlantic, as many subsequent voyagers have been. Their haven is reached, and with hearty cheers the ships are warped into Erebus and Terror Bay, and arrangements rapidly made to meet the coming winter of 1845-46.

(To be continued.)



THE LAST VOYAGE OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

BY CAPTAIN SHERARD OSBORN, R.N. (PART II.)



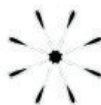
Burial of Sir John Franklin. (See page 366.)



UNDER the friendly shelter of Beechey Island, Franklin and his followers reposed from their arduous labours of 1845, and looked forward confidently to the success which must now attend their efforts in the following year. And had they not reason to be confident? Did they not know that, in their remarkable voyage up Wellington Channel and down the new Strait, west of Cornwallis Island, they had explored *three hundred miles* of previously unknown channels leading to the north-west? Could they not point to Cape Walker, and say, "Assuredly it will be an easy task next season to push our ships over the *two hundred and fifty miles* of water which must intervene between Cape Walker and King William's Land." Of course they thought thus. And that their hopes were fulfilled, though they lived not to wear their honours, we know, alas! too well. The Polar winter came in upon them like a giant—it ever does so. No alternate frost and thaw, sunshine and gloom, there delays the advent of the winter. Within the frigid zone each season steps upon sea and earth to the appointed day, with all its distinctive characteristics strongly marked. In one night winter strikes nature with its mailed hand, and silence, coldness, death, reign supreme. The soil and springs are frozen adamant: the streamlet no

longer trickles from beneath the snow-choked ravines: the plains, slopes, and terraces of this land of barrenness are clad in winter livery of dazzling white: the adjacent seas and fiords can hardly be distinguished from the land, owing to the uniformity of colour. A shroud of snow envelopes the stricken region, except where sharp and clear against the hard blue sky stand out the gaunt mountain precipices of North Devon and the dark and frowning cliffs of Beechey Island—cliffs too steep for even snow-flake to hang upon. There they stand, huge ebon giants, brooding over the land of famine and suffering spread beneath their feet!

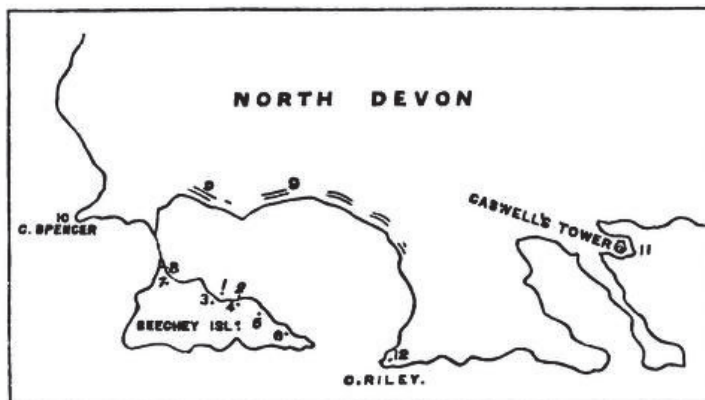
Day after day, in rapidly diminishing arcs, the sun at noon approaches the southern edge of the horizon. It is the first week of November, and I see before me a goodly array of officers and men issue from the ship, and proceed to scale the heights of the neighbouring island: they go to bid the bright sun good-bye until February, 1846. At noon, the upper edge of the orb gleams like a beacon-fire for a few minutes over the snow-enveloped shores of North Somerset—and it is gone—leaving them to three months of twilight and darkness. Offering up a silent, fervent prayer for themselves, who were standing there to see that sunset, and for their dear friends in the ice-beset



barks at their feet, that they might all be spared to welcome back the life-imparting planet, we see these pilgrims to the God of light turn and descend into the darkness and gloom now hanging over the bay of the Erebus and Terror.

The tale of energetic battle with cold privation and festering monotony has been often told: why repeat that the officers and men under Franklin in their first winter within the frozen zone, as nobly bore the one and cheerfully combatted the other? The ruins and traces left behind them all attest it. The observatory, with its double embankment of earth and stones, its neat finish, and the lavish expenditure of labour in pavement and pathway: the shooting gallery under the cliff, the seats formed of stones, the remains of pleasant picnics in empty bottles and meat-tins strewn about: the elaborate cairn upon the north point of Beechey—a pyramid eight feet high, and at least six feet long on each side of the base—constructed of old meat-tins filled with gravel: all tell the same tale of manful anxiety for physical employment to distract the mind from suffering and solitude. On board the ships we picture to ourselves the Arctic school and theatre: the scholar and dramatist exerting themselves to kill monotony and amuse or instruct their comrades. There are not wanting traces at Cape Riley to show how earnestly the naturalists Goodsir and Stanley laboured to collect specimens: now was their time to arrange and note upon their labours. There is more than one site still visible of tents in which the magnetical observations were obtained: now was the time to record and compare such observations. And, in addition to the charming novelty of a first winter in the frozen sea, the officers in so scientific an expedition had abundance of employment, in noting the various phenomena which were daily and hourly occurring around them.

But at length darkness and winter pass away, sunlight and spring return; pale faces again recover their natural rosy tint. Only three of the original party of one hundred and thirty-eight souls have succumbed; * the rest, though thinner, are now inured and hardened to all the changes of the Arctic climate, and exhibit no lack of energy or strength. As soon as the temperature will admit of it, parties are despatched from the ships in various directions with sledges and tents: some have scientific objects in view; others are directed to try and procure game for their sickly comrades, or to eke out the store of provisions, now reduced to a two years' stock: and, sad it is to record it, nearly all their preserved meats were those of the miscreant Goldner. Exploratory parties were likewise not wanting; and those who came on their footsteps in after years saw the signs of their lost comrades' zeal and industry on every side. From Caswell's Tower, which looks towards Lancaster Sound, to Point Innis up Wellington Channel, the marks of camping places and the trails of their sledges were frequent. It was sad to remark, from the form of their cooking places, and the deep ruts left by their sledges over the edge of the terraces which abound in the neighbourhood of Beechey Island, how little Franklin's people were impressed with the importance of rendering their travelling equipment light and portable, both as a means of exploration whilst their ships were imprisoned, and to enable them to escape if their ships were destroyed. The anxiety for their fate, expressed by many in Captain Austin's expedition, when remarking upon the fearful expenditure of labour which must have been entailed on Franklin's men in dragging about such sledges as they had evidently had with them, has only been too truly verified. The longest journey made by sledge parties from the Erebus and Terror at Beechey Island, so far



TRACES LEFT AT FRANKLIN'S FIRST WINTER-QUARTERS IN 1845-6.

- 1, 2. Ships.
3. Store.
4. Graves and Forge.
5. Washing Place.
6. Shooting Gallery.
7. Garden.
8. Cairn.
9. Sledge Marks.
10. Shooting Gallery.
11. Cairns.
12. Shooting Gallery.

as we know, does not exceed twenty miles; whereas three and four hundred miles outward has been recently done by our later Arctic explorers. Franklin's experience of travelling in the Hudson's Bay Territory was evidently at fault in the rugged and desert region in which he was now sojourning; and he had no McClintock at his side to show him how, by mechanical skill and careful attention to weights and equipment, sledges might be constructed on which men might carry boats,

tents, clothing, food, and fuel, and travel with impunity from February to August, and explore, as he himself has done in that time, nearly fourteen hundred miles of ground or frozen sea.

* All the traces alluded to in these articles, as well as those delineated in the accompanying plate, were discovered at and about Beechey Island, in 1850-51, by the expeditions under Captain H. Austin, C.B., Captain Penny, and Captain de Haven. The tombstones recorded the deaths of two seamen, on January 1st and January 4th, 1846, and that of a marine, who died on April 3rd of the same year.

However, no anxieties then pressed on the minds of those gallant men; "large water" was all they thought of; give them that, and Behring's Straits in their ships was still their destination.

The sun has ceased to set, night is as the day, the snow has long melted off land and floe, the detached parties have all returned to their ships, yards are crossed, rigging set up, sails bent, the graves of their shipmates are neatly paved round, shells from the bay are prettily arranged over the sailor's last home by some old messmate. Franklin, with that Christian earnestness which ever formed so charming a trait in his character, selects, at the request of his men, epitaphs which appeal to the hearts of all, and perhaps no finer picture could be conceived than that firm and veteran leader leading his beloved crews on to the perilous execution of their worldly duty, yet calmly pointing to that text of Holy Writ in which the prophet warrior of old reminded his people of their God, "Choose ye this day, whom ye will serve."

The garden on Beechey Island refuses to yield any vegetables from the seeds so carefully sown in it; but the officers have brought and transplanted within its border every tuft of saxifrage and pretty anemone and poppy which can be found. The pale pink of the one and delicate straw colour of the other form the only pleasing relief from the monotonous colouring of the barren land. Sportsmen return and declare the game to be too wild for farther sport; but cheer all by saying that the deer and hare have changed their coats from white to russet colour; the ptarmigan's brood have taken wing, the wild duck has long since led her callow young to the open lakes, or off to "holes of water" which are rapidly increasing under cliffs and projecting headlands—all the signs denote that the disruption of the frozen surface of the sea is at hand.

The day of release arrives: in the morning a black sky has been seen over the eastern portion of Barrow's Straits, that together with a low barometer indicates a S.E. breeze. The cracks which radiate over the floes in every direction gradually widen, then close again, and form "heavy nips," in which the fearful pressure occasions a dull grinding noise. Presently the look-out man on Beechey Island throws out the signal. The floes are in motion! A loud hurrah welcomes the joyful signal—a race for the point to see the destruction of the ice. It moves indeed. A mighty agency is at work; the floe heaves and cracks, now presses fearfully in one direction, and then in another; occasionally the awful pressure acting horizontally upon a huge floe-piece makes it, though ten feet thick, curve up in a dome-like shape. A dull moaning is heard as if the very ice cried mercy, and then, with a sharp report, the mass is shivered into fragments, hurled up one on top of the other. Water rapidly shows in all directions, and within twenty-four hours there is quite as much sea seen as there was of ice yesterday. Yet the ice-fields in bays and inlets are still fast; this is the land-floe, and in that of Beechey Island the ships are still fast locked; but anticipating such would be the case, all the spring long men have been carefully sprinkling ashes, sand, and gravel over the ice in a straight line from the Erebus and

Terror to the entrance of the bay. The increased action of the sun upon these foreign substances has occasioned a rapid decay of the floe beneath them, and it only needs a little labour to extricate the expedition.

"Hands cut out ships!" pipes the cheery boat-swain. A hundred strong hands and a dozen ice-saws are soon at work, whilst loud song and merriment awaken the long silent echoes of Beechey Island. The water is reached, the sail is made, the ships cast to the westward, and again they speed towards Cape Walker.

If we open a chart of the Arctic Regions,* it will be observed that *westward* and *northward* of the Parry Islands there is a wide sea whose limits are as yet unknown, and the ice which incumbers it has never yet been traversed by ship or sledge. All those navigators, Collinson and M'Clure in their ships, and M'Clintock and Meham with their sledges, who have with much difficulty and danger skirted along the southern and eastern edge of this truly frozen sea, mention, in terms of wonderment, the stupendous thickness and massive proportions of the vast floes with which it is closely packed. It was between this truly polar ice and the steep cliffs of Banks's Land that Sir Robert M'Clure fairly fought his way in the memorable voyage of the Investigator. It was in the narrow and tortuous lane of water left between the low beach line of North America and the wall of ice formed by the grounded masses of this fearful pack that the gallant Collinson carried, in 1852 and 1853, the Enterprise by way of Behring's Straits to and from the farther shores of Victoria Land; and it was in the far north-west of the Parry group that M'Clintock and Meham, with their sledges in 1853 gazed, as Parry had done five-and-thirty years before, with astonishment on that pack-ice to which all they had seen in the seas between Prince Patrick's Land and the Atlantic was a mere bagatelle. It is not that the cold is here more intense, or that the climate is more rigorous, but this accumulation of ponderous ice arises simply from the want of any large direct communication between that portion of the Polar Sea and the warm waters of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Behring's Strait is the only vent in a south-westerly direction, and that strait is so shallow that this polar ice (which has been found to draw as much as sixty and eighty feet of water, and to have hummocks upon it of a hundred feet in height), generally grounds in it, until thawed away by the action of the Pacific gulf stream; and, on the other hand, towards the Atlantic Ocean, the channels, as it will be observed, are most tortuous and much barred with islands. The grand law of nature by which the ice of our Northern Pole is ever flowing towards the torrid zone, holds good, however, within the area to which we are alluding; and in spite of all obstacles, and although the accumulation of ice every winter exceeds the discharge and destruction, still the action is even southerly, as in the seas of Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla. The slow march of this ice-stream is, however, far more like that of the ice from some

* Mr. Arrowsmith, of 400 Square, has published an excellent and cheap general map, on a small scale, which will be found very correct.

huge parent glacier than of anything else, for lanes of water, or clear spaces of sea, are seldom if ever seen amongst it; indeed, so compact, so

impenetrable is its character, that as yet no navigator has ever succeeded in crossing any of the ice-streams from this sea of desolation.



One of these impenetrable ice-streams flows down between Melville and Banks's Land, and impinging with fearful force upon the exposed western shores of Prince of Wales's Land and the islands across Barrow's Straits, curves down what we hope will be called M'Clintock Channel, until it is fairly blocked up in the narrows about King William's Land. Here the southern edge of the ice-stream comes in contact with the warm waters flowing northward from the rivers of the continent of America, and undergoes a constant and rapid disintegration, the rear of the ice-stream ever pressing forward, yet constantly melted away,* as it reaches the limit which Providence has set upon it.

As Franklin sailed to the west from Beechey Island, he fell upon the edge of this ice-stream in about the longitude of Cape Walker; then to the west of it, and of Lowther, Young, and Hamilton Islands, he observed the floes being broken up, and rapidly disintegrated by meeting the warm waters of Barrow's Straits; but within and amongst that pack there could have been no hope of a passage, whilst on the other hand the ridges of pressed-up shingle and off-lying shoals round the land west of Cape Walker threatened destruction to the Erebus and Terror if they attempted that route; whereas, as far as they could look southward between Capes Walker and Bunney, there stretched away a fair and promising channel leading direct to the American continent, and with ice in it of no very aged appearance. Who that has stood as they did on Cape Walker can doubt which route Franklin preferred under such circumstances?

The middle of August, and a fortnight of navigation are before them. A lead! a lead! and large water! away to the south, calls the ice-master from the crow's nest, and from under the friendly shelter of Cape Walker the Expedition bears away, and they progress a-pace down what we know as Peel's Channel. On the eastern hand rise the steep black cliffs of North Somerset, cut here and there with deep cleft and snow-filled

ravine; along the base a ridge of ice is piled up; full forty feet high, it gleams in white and blue against the granite cliff, and is reflected in the calm waters of an Arctic summer's day—how still, how calm, how sublimely grand—but the experienced seaman is not beguiled by the deceptive beauty of such a scene, but thinks of the dark and stormy nights when, and that before many short days are past, the north-west hurricane will again launch against those cliffs, the ice-fields of Melville Strait. On the western hand, the sandstone cliffs, and the sheltered coves of Prince of Wales's Land, have donned their brightest looks, and siren-like, lure the discoverer, by many an unexplored bay and fiord, to delay awhile and visit them. It may not be; the Erebus and Terror press on, for is not Cape Herschel of King William's Land and the American continent ahead—are they not fast nearing it? Once there, will they not have discovered the long-sought passage? Will they not have done that "one thing whereby great minds may become notable." Two degrees of latitude are passed over; the passage contracts; for awhile it looks as if they were in a cul-de-sac; islands locked in with one another, excite some anxiety for a channel. The two ships are close to each other, the eager officers and men crowd gunwale and tops. Hepburn Island bars the way: they round it. Hurrah, hurrah! the path opens before them, the lands on either hand recede, as sea, an open sea, is before them. They dip their ensigns, and cheer each other in friendly congratulation: joy, joy! another one hundred miles, and King William's Island will rise in view. The prize is now within their grasp, whatever be the cost.

The sailor's prayer for open water is, however, only granted in a limited sense, for directly the coast of Prince of Wales's Land is lost to view, and that they are no longer shielded by land to the west, the great ice-stream from Melville Island again falls upon it. The Erebus and Terror pass a channel leading into Regent's Inlet, our Bellot Channel; they advance down the edge of that ice-stream as far as latitude 71°. The only passage to

* Taking the drift of the lost Erebus and Terror from September, 1846, to April, 1848, as our guide, this ice-stream moves at about the rate of a mile and-a-half in a month.

the coast of America that Franklin knows of, is now nearly south-west of his position, it leads between King William's and Victoria Land. For, alas! in his chart King William's Land [see opposite] was represented to be connected with Boothia by a deep bay, called Poet's Bay. It is true that to the south-west the hopeless looking ice-stream bars his way, and that to the south-east the road looks clear and promising; but then, did not his chart say that there was no channel east of King William's Land, by which to reach the American shore? There was no alternative, they must enter the pack or ice-stream, and go with it to the south-west.

Had they not already passed over two-hundred

out of the three-hundred miles between Cape Walker and Cape Herschel? Were they the men to flinch from a struggle for the remaining hundred miles? That struggle commenced as the winter closed in, and just as King William's Land was in sight, the Erebus and Terror became beset, and eventually fixed for the winter of 1846-7, in latitude $70^{\circ} 5'$ north, and longitude $98^{\circ} 23'$ west, about twelve miles due north, of Cape Felix. More dangerous and unpromising winter-quarters could hardly have fallen to their lot, but they were helpless in that ice-stream. Sixteen years previously Sir James Ross had stood upon Cape Felix. He travelled on foot in the early spring of 1830, from Victoria Harbour in the Gulf of



In the ice-stream off Cape Felix.

Boothia, and explored the northern coast of King William's Land, and standing on the 29th of May, on this very Cape Felix, remarked with astonishment the fearful nature of the oceanic ice, which was pressed upon the shores; and he mentions that in some places the pressure had driven the floes inland, half a mile beyond the highest tide-mark! Such the terrible winter-quarters of those lone barks and their gallant crews; and if that season of monotony and hardship was trying to them in Beechey Island, where they could in some measure change the scene by travelling in one direction or the other, how infinitely more so it must have been with nothing round them, but ice-hummock and floe-piece, with the ships constantly subjected to pressure and ice-nip, and the crews often threatened during the depth of winter with the probability of having their ships swallowed up in an arctic tempest, when the ice-fields would rear, and crush themselves one against the other under the influence of the awful pressure from the north-west.

The God of storms, who thus lashed the wintry north with his might, shielded however those

brave men; and now, inured to the dangers of icy seas, they slept and laboured not less pleasantly because the floes were rocking their wooden homes; and consoled themselves, that they were only then ninety miles from Cape Herschel, and that even a sledge party could reach it next spring (1847), before the navigation would be open.

Thus their second winter passes. King William's Land shows out here and there from its winter livery; for evaporation serves to denude those barren lands of snow, long before any thaw takes place. May comes in, the unsetting sun in dazzling splendour pours its flood of perpetual light over the broken, shattered blocks of ice, while from the great ice-stream, drops of water form on the black sides of the weather-beaten ships, and icicles hang pendant from the edge of hummocks; yet it is still intensely cold in the shade. Lieutenant Graham Gore, and Mr. F. Des Vaux, mate, both of the Erebus, are about to leave the ships for the land; they have six men with them. Why do all grasp them so fervently by the hand? Why do even the sick come up to give them a parting cheer? Surely they went

forth to bring back the assurance that the expedition was really in the direct channel leading to those waters traversed in former years by Franklin; and to tell them all that they really were the discoverers of the long-sought passage. One footprint was left by Gore and Des Vaux, in a cairn beyond Cape Victory on the west coast of King William's Land; it tells us that "on May 24th, 1847, all were well on board the ships, and that Sir John Franklin still commanded." Graham Gore probably traversed the short distance between his cairn, and that on Cape Herschel in a week; and we can fancy him and the enthusiastic Des Vaux, casting one glance upon the long-sought shores of America, and hastening back to share their delight with those imprisoned in the ships.

Alas! why do their shipmates meet the flushed travellers with sorrow imprinted on pale countenances? Why, as they cheer at the glad tidings they bring, does the tear suffuse the eye of these rough and hardy men? Their chief lies on his death-bed; a long career of honour and of worth is drawing to its close. The shout of victory, which cheered the last hour of Nelson and of Wolfe, rang not less heartily round the bed of the gallant Franklin, and lit up that kind eye with its last gleam of triumph. Like them, his last thought must have been of his country's glory, and the welfare of those whom he well knew must now hope in vain for his return.

A toll for the brave—the drooping ensigns of England trail only half-mast; officers and men with sad faces walk lightly as if they feared to disturb the mortal remains of him they love so much. The solemn peal of the ship's bell reverberates amongst the masses of solid ice; a group of affectionate followers stand round a huge chasm amongst the ice-stream, and Fitzjames, who had sworn only to part from him in death, reads the service for the dead over the grave of Franklin.

Oh! mourn him not, seamen and brother Englishmen! unless ye can point to a more honourable end or a nobler grave. Like another Moses, he fell when his work was accomplished, with the long object of his life in view. The discoverer of the North-west Passage had his Pisgah, and so long as his countrymen shall hold dear disinterested devotion and gallant perseverance in a good cause, so long shall they point to the career and fate of Admiral Sir John Franklin.

* * * * *

The autumn comes. It is not without anxiety that Crozier and Fitzjames contemplate the prospect before them; but they keep those feelings to themselves. The Pacific is far off; the safe retreat of their men up the Great Fish River, or Coppermine, is fraught with peril, unless their countrymen at home have established depôts of provisions at their embouchures; and worse still their provisions fail next year, and scurvy is already showing itself amongst the crews. At last the ice-stream moves—it swings to and fro—the vessels are thrown into one position of danger and then another. Days elapse—ah! they count the hours before winter will assuredly come back; and how they pray for water—water to float the ships in;

only one narrow lane through this hard-hearted pack—one narrow lane for ninety miles, and they are saved! but, if not * * * * * Thy will be done!

The ice-stream moves south; the men fear to remark to each other how slowly; the march of a glacier down the Alpine pass is almost as rapid. Yet it does move south, and they look to heaven and thank their God. Ten miles, twenty miles, are passed over, still beset; not a foot of open water in sight, yet still they drift to the south. Thirty miles are now accomplished; they have only sixty miles of ice between them and the sea, off the American coast—nay, less; for only let them get round that west extreme of King William's, which is seen projecting into the ice-stream, and they are saved!

September, 1847, has come in; the new ice is forming fast; the drift of the ice-stream diminishes,—can it have stopped? Mercy! mercy! It sways to and fro;—gaunt, scurvy-stricken men watch the daily movement with bated breath; the ships have ceased to drift; they are now fifteen miles north of Cape Victory. God, in His mercy, shield those gallant crews! The dread winter of 1847-48 closes around these forlorn and now desperate men;—disease and scurvy, want and cold, now indeed press them heavily. Brave men are suffering; we will not look upon their sore trial.

The sun of 1848 rises again upon the imprisoned expedition, and never did it look down on a nobler, yet sadder sight. Nine officers and twelve men have perished during the past season of trial; the survivors, one hundred and four in number, are assembled round their leaders—Crozier and Fitzjames—a wan, half-starved crew. Poor souls, they are going to escape for their lives by ascending the Great Fish River. Fitzjames, still vigorous, conceals his fears of ever saving so many in the hunger-stricken region they have to traverse. As the constant friend and companion of Franklin, he knows but too well from the fearful experiences of his lamented chief, what toil, hardship and want await them before a country capable of supporting life can be reached. All that long last winter has he pored over the graphic and touching tale of Franklin's overland journeys in Arctic America, and culled but small hope; yet he knows there is no time for despondency; the men look to their officers for hope and confidence at such a juncture, and shall he be wanting at such a crisis? No, assuredly not; and he strives hard, by kind and cheering words—to impart new courage to many a drooping heart. The fresh preserved provisions on board the ships have failed; salted meat is simply poison to the scurvy-stricken men; they must quit the ships or die, and if they must die, is it not better that they should do so making a last gallant struggle for life? and, at any rate, they can leave their bleaching skeletons as a monument upon Cape Herschel, of having successfully done their duty.

Yes, of course it is. They pile up their sledges with all description of gear, for as yet they know not how much their strength has diminished. Each ship's company brings a large whale-boat

which has been carefully fitted upon a sledge; in them the sick and disabled are tenderly packed; each man carries a great quantity of clothing—care is taken to have plenty of guns, powder, and shot, for they can drag at the utmost but forty days' provision with them, and at the expiration of that time they hope to be in a country where their guns will feed them. Every trinket and piece of silver in the ships is carefully divided amongst the men; they hope to conciliate the natives with these baubles, or to procure food, and so far as fore-sight could afford the party every hope of safety, all has been done; but one fatal error occurred,—the question of weight to be dragged, with diminished physical power, has never been taken into consideration; or, if considered, no proper remedy applied.

On the 22nd of April, 1848, these gallant men fell into the drag-ropes of their sledges and boats; the colours were hoisted on their dear old ships, three hearty cheers were given for the stout craft that had borne them so nobly through many perils, and without a blush at deserting Her Majesty's ships *Erebus* and *Terror*, Captains Crozier and Fitzjames lead the road to the nearest point of land, named Cape Victory.* Poor souls, they were three days traversing the intervening distance of fifteen miles, and the sad conviction was already pressing upon them, that they had over-estimated their physical strength and powers of endurance. Around the large cairn erected upon Point Victory the shivering diseased men cast away everything that could be spared; indeed perhaps much that, at that inclement season, they still needed to shield their half-starved frames from the biting blast. Pickaxes, shovels, rope, blocks, clothing, stores of all sorts, except provisions, sextants, quadrants, oars, and even a medicine-case, expressly fitted up for the journey, were here thrown away. Unrolling the record left here in the previous year by the good and gallant Gore, Captain Fitzjames proceeded to write round its margin those few, alas! too few; but graphic words, which tell us all we shall ever know of this last sad page in their touching history. The ink had to be thawed by fire, and benumbed must the hand have been that wrote those words; yet the writing is that of the same firm, self-reliant, light-hearted man who, three short years previously had been noted at Greenhithe as the life of the expedition.

In spite of frostbites and fatigue, the party presses on. They must keep marching southward towards the mainland where they hope to find deer and salmon, for upon their sledges they have only got forty days' provision, and that store will be expended by the 7th of June, at latest.†

* So called by Captain Sir James Ross in his exploration of 1830. It was the farthest point reached on King William's Land by that indefatigable Arctic traveller.

† Franklin's expedition had no pemican, the most portable and nutritious of food; but even had they had some, it is well known by the experience of Arctic travellers that forty days is the maximum quantity of food, in addition to other weights, that the best equipped party could have dragged on their sledges, and as the Great Fish River was known not to open before August, it must have been dire necessity alone that induced Crozier and Fitzjames to quit their ships at so early a period of the year that nearly six weeks must have intervened between the expenditure of the provision upon their sledges and the disruption of the ice upon the Great Fish River.

How are they to live after that? is a sad thought which flashes across the mind of many. They sigh, but will not impart their anxieties to each other. Seamen-like, the light joke and merry laugh still flashes from mouth to mouth, and seems for the while to lighten the poor heart of its load of misery.

Poor lost ones! we mark them day by day, growing weaker under the fearful toil of dragging such ponderous sledges and boats, as well as their disabled comrades, through the deep snow, and over rugged ice; we hear the cheering appeal of the gallant officers to the despairing ones, the kind applause heartily bestowed to the self-sacrificing and the brave. Bodily endurance has its limits, devotion to one's brother man its bounds, and halfway between Cape Victory where they landed, and Cape Herschel, it becomes apparent that if any are to be saved there must be a division of the party, and that the weak and disabled must stay behind, or return to the ships. One of the large boats is here turned with her bow northward, some stay here, the rest push on. Of those who thus remained, or tried to return, all we know is, that in long years afterwards, two skeletons were found in that boat, and that the wandering Esquimaux found on board one ship, the bones of another "large man with long teeth," as they described him. On the fate of the rest of the sick and weak, and they must have formed a large proportion of the original party of 106 souls that landed on Cape Victory, we need not dwell.

The rest push on, they have tried to cheer their shipmates with the hope that they will yet return to save them—vain hope! Yet we see them with bending bodies, and with the sweat-drops freezing upon their pallid faces, straining every nerve to save sweet life—they pass from sight into the snow-storm, which the warm south wind kindly sends to shroud the worn-out ones, who gently lie down to die; and they died so peacefully, so calmly, with the mind sweetly wandering back to the homes and friends of their childhood; the long-remembered prayer upon their lips, and their last fleeting thoughts of some long-treasured love for one they would some day meet in Heaven. The cairn on Cape Herschel was reached, no one had been there since "Deare and Simpson" in 1839, except themselves. Here the last record was placed of their success and sad position, and then this forlorn hope of desperate men pushed on towards the Great Fish River; and, if we needed any proof of Franklin's Expedition having been the "first to discover the North-west passage," or of the utter extremity to which this retreating party was reduced, we need but point to the bleaching skeleton which lies a few miles southward of Cape Herschel; that silent witness has been accorded us, and he still lies as he fell, on his face, with his head towards his home. His comrades had neither turned, nor buried him. But why pursue the subject farther? why attempt to lift the veil with which the All Merciful has been pleased to shut out from mortal ken, the last sad hour of brave men battling with famine and disease.

All we know farther of this "forlorn hope" is that Dr. Rae, from Esquimaux report, states that about

forty white men were seen early one spring, dragging a boat and sledges south upon, or near, King William's Land. The men were thin, and supposed to be getting short of provisions; the party was led by a stout middle-aged man. Later in the season, after the arrival of the wild fowl (May), but before the ice broke up, the bodies of thirty persons, and some graves, were discovered on the continent, and five other corpses on an island; some of these bodies were in a tent, others under the boat which had been turned over to afford shelter. Of those corpses seen on the island, one was supposed to be a chief; he had a telescope over his shoulders, and a double-barrelled gun beneath him. The native description of the locality where this sad scene was discovered agreed exactly with Montreal Island and Point Ogle, at the entrance of the Great Fish River; and knowing what we now do of the position of the ships, the date of abandonment, and taking all circumstances into consideration, it is now vain to sup-

pose that any survivors exist of the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror*; nor is it likely that records of their voyage will now be found, as we may be assured that no Christian officers or men, would for one moment think of dragging logs, books, or journals with them when they were obliged to abandon their dying comrades on King William's Land: and, indeed, when it is remembered that they neither *cached* journals or books of any description at Cape Victory, or the deserted boat, it is not probable that any were ever taken out of the vessels at a juncture when the sole object must have been to save life—and life only.

We shall soon learn, from the publication of Captain M'Clintock's journals, how a woman's devoted love, and a generous nation's sympathy, at last cleared up the mystery which once hung over the voyage of her Majesty's ships *Erebus* and *Terror*, and secured to Franklin and his followers the honour for which they died—that of being the *First Discoverers of the North-West Passage*.

A PHASE OF THE ARCTIC MYSTERY.

THE details of the expedition sent out by Lady Franklin in the steam yacht *Fox*, shortly will be, if they are not already, before the public.

Sir John Franklin, as we learn, died as early as June 11th, 1847. His ships the *Erebus* and *Terror* were beset on September 12th, 1846, in lat. 70° 05' N., and long. 88° 23' W. On 22nd April, 1848, the ships were abandoned five leagues N.N.W. of Point Victory, King William's Island, where 105 survivors under Captain Crozier landed, and on April 25th deposited in a cairn the records brought home by Captain M'Clintock.

That gallant officer, with Lieutenant Hobson, made a minute search of the whole coast of King William's Island, and on its south shore found death-traces of members of the expedition, at a point exactly opposite that portion of the main land of North America, whence the relics sent home in 1854, and now in Greenwich Hospital, had been procured, viz., Point Ogle, a cape at the mouth of the Great Fish River, and Montreal Island in its estuary.

It is impossible to rise from the perusal of Captain M'Clintock's journal, without the absolute conviction that the late Sir John Franklin's companions died the victims, less of those perils of their profession which they were naturally prepared to encounter, than of official apathy, or at least of mistaken judgment.

The following facts, arranged in order of date, are relied on to prove that this representation is correct.

It is to be borne in mind, that King William's Island lies off the west land of North Somerset, and that the silent but terribly convincing testimony of the bleached skeletons on the way, proves that from the moment of landing on Point Victory, the survivors were struggling in a death-struggle for the Great Fish River.

12th Dec., 1844. "My Lords" Commissioners

of the Admiralty resolve upon another expedition by sea in search of the North West Passage, and appoint Sir John Franklin to the command.

20th Feb., 1845. A distinguished Arctic traveller and eminent physician, Dr. King, of Savile Row, who, so far back as 1835, had acquired renown as medical officer and second in command of an overland journey in search of Sir John Ross, —hearing of the proposed expedition by sea, and regarding it, to use his own phrase, as a “forlorn hope,”—addresses to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Stanley, now the Earl of Derby, a proposal for a land journey by the Great Fish River, to aid the Franklin expedition in its geographical survey.

5th May, 1845. “My Lords” issue their instructions to Sir John Franklin, who sails with the *Erebus* and *Terror*.

26th July, 1845. The ships are seen in Baffin Bay, for the last time.

10th June, 1847. Dr. King writes to Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, “My Lord, one hundred and thirty-eight men are at this moment in imminent danger of perishing by famine;” he regrets that Lord Stanley does not entertain the proposition for a land journey by the Great Fish River, renews his proposal, shows how it can be carried out, assigns the western land of North Somerset as the position of the lost expedition, points out that if Sir John Franklin is to be relieved, it must be in the summer of 1848, and implores permission to render him “the only succour which has the probability of success.”

25th Nov., 1847. Dr. King again addresses Earl Grey, Lord Stanley's successor in the administration of the Colonial Department: “The last ray of hope has passed that Sir John Franklin by his own exertions can save himself and his one hundred and thirty-seven followers from the death of starvation. I trust, therefore, your Lordship will excuse my calling your attention to my letter of 10th June last, which is acknowledged, but which remains unanswered.” Dr. King argues most ably the geographical question, and once more begs to be allowed a place in “the great effort which must be made for the rescue of the one hundred and thirty-eight men who compose the lost expedition.”

8th Dec., 1847. Dr. King, for the third time, addresses Earl Grey on the subject of a new expedition, proposed by the Admiralty, to search the coast of North America for Franklin, from the Mackenzie to the Coppermine rivers, with Wollaston land, opposite that coast, in 1848, and Victoria land in the summer of 1849. He also offers to go at once by the Great Fish River to Victoria land, as well as to the Western land of North Somerset.

16th Dec., 1847. Dr. King acknowledges the receipt of a reply from Lord Grey, desiring him to address any application he may desire to make, to “My Lords” of the Admiralty. Dr. King regrets that Earl Grey should have delayed his answer from June to December, because, if anything is to be done, it must be in progress by February. He explains that he is not “soliciting employment,” but “endeavouring to induce Earl Grey to take the necessary measures for saving the lives of one

hundred and thirty-eight fellow-creatures;” adding that he does not ask Earl Grey to make good the loss he would sustain by giving up his private practice and five appointments of honour and emolument—a loss which cannot be measured by a money standard, but that he “comes forward again only for the sake of humanity.”

16th Feb., 1848. Dr. King writes to “My Lords” repeating fully his arguments as to the western land of North Somerset, and undertaking to do in one summer what has not before been done under two; he also explains how he can do it, and again volunteers to go by the Great Fish River.

3rd March, 1848. Dr. King complains to Mr. H. G. Ward, Secretary to “My Lords,” that he has received no reply to his letter of February 16th; states that March 15th is the latest period at which he should feel justified in starting on this expedition, and requests early information of their Lordships' decision, as he will have to make arrangements to vacate his professional appointments.

3rd March, 1848. Mr. H. G. Ward is commanded by “My Lords” to acquaint Dr. King, that “they have no intention of altering their present arrangements, or of making any others that will require his assistance, or force him to make the sacrifices he appears to contemplate.”

18th Feb., 1850. Dr. King again urges on “My Lords” the overland expedition by the Great Fish River, and is strengthened in his convictions by the unsuccessful results of the various attempts to relieve Franklin by sea.

28th Feb., 1850. “My Lords” must decline the offer of Dr. King's services.

19th July, 1854. Dr. Rae, a Chief Factor in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, engaged in completing a survey of the west coast of Boothia, writing from Repulse Bay, reports to “My Lords” that on the 17th April he has met with Esquimaux in Pelly Bay, from whom he gathered, “that in the spring, four winters past (spring, 1850), a party of forty white men were seen travelling southward over the ice. * * * At a later date in the same season, the bodies of thirty were discovered on the continent, and five on an island near it, about a long day's journey N.W. of the Oot-ko-hi-ca-lik.” The land is, as Dr. Rae states, Point Ogle, and the island Montreal Island, in the Great Fish River.

20th June, 1855. Mr. James Anderson, a Chief Factor in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, started for the Great Fish River, and returned on 17th September. He found on Montreal Island absolute proofs of the truth of the Esquimaux story, as related to Dr. Rae.

So lately as 1850, some of Sir John Franklin's party were absolutely alive upon the GREAT FISH RIVER.

We cannot venture to do more than offer the above facts to our readers. We dare not trust ourselves to comment on them. Englishmen must decide between Dr. King and the successive Secretaries of State and Admiralty Boards, who disregarded a proposal, by which it is now clear that this remnant might have been saved.

“My Lords” were too official to entertain the right proposal; can they now be touched by the

story of an Esquimaux woman who records the fate of the *last Arctic victim* to the "Foul Anchor"? Let them listen:

"One of the lost crew died upon Montreal Island."

"The rest perished on the coast of the mainland."

"The wolves were very thick."

"Only one man was living when their tribe arrived."

"Him it was too late to save."

"He was large and strong, and sat on the sandy beach, his head resting on his hand; and thus he died."

VOYAGEUR.

